An Examination of How the Decline of Male Educators, on the Elementary School Level Has Had a Negative Effect on Student Development

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Abstract

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**Introduction**

The lack of male teachers, particularly at the elementary level, has become an epidemic throughout the world. While the debate over a male teacher’s place at the elementary level has gone on it’s one that has transcended throughout the past. A recent survey, conducted by the National Education Association (NEA), revealed that men accounted for less than one-fourth of all teachers. Recent studies have revealed that while one of the reasons for the shortage of male teachers is pay-related, others place most of the blame on unfounded stereotypes and gender politics. In particular, the classification of the art of teaching as “women’s work” and in inability of male teachers to adapt into the “mothering role” has held many aback. Theorists and Researchers have spent time exploring the state of male teachers at the elementary level and the correlation, if any, between male teachers and student development. Most young children develop through observing the actions and words of those around them. Studies have shown that a male role model is essential at the elementary level. Are we eliminating the male role model? Are students being harmed by the elimination of male teachers? Most importantly, does it make any difference at all?

**Statement of the Problem**

There’s no denying that the place of male teachers at the elementary level has long been an issue of discussion and even controversy. The statistics show that males, for a variety of reasons, have long been absent from the elementary classrooms. While some believe that the fact that female teachers being the majority in elementary education is fitting with the current stereotypes and gender associations in the field, others believe that our students are hurting because of it. The lack of a strong male role model in their lives could prove to have a harming effect on their development as students. As education moves further and further away from quality and more towards the gender of the teacher, researchers are looking at the differences in the way in which students react to their educators based on gender.

**Review of Related Literature**

Their seems to be a fine line between those whose research has yielded a difference in student performance and those who have not when it comes to male teachers. Many researchers have used different methodologies and instruments to measure the actual effect on student performance when being taught by a male in comparison to a female. The pros seem to rely heavenly upon the idea of male teachers as role models. Research concurs (Martino, 2008; Sakire & Beyazkurk, 2008; Mills et al., 2004; Drudy, 2008) classification of teaching as “women’s work” has a history that can be traced back to the mid-1800s. Male teachers, viewed

as role models, is one of the most defining aspects of their presence at the elementary level. “Recuperative Masculinity Politics” introduces bringing back masculinity in order to combat current stereotypes (Martino, 2008). The term refers to the fact that males must be present in the classroom at the elementary level in order to deal with the current feminisation of the field. This, as Martino mentions, is particularly important for young boys. Martino further discusses how teaching being defined as “women’s work” has really hurt the position of male teachers in our education system and kept them out of the field. “My main proposition in this article is that the

perceived intensified feminization of elementary schooling and the anxieties it incites for men doing women’s work represents another example of defensive masculinity with educational policy and the public media responding in ways which present men as victims who are in need of affirmative action initiatives to increase their presence in a female-dominated world where boys are being deprived of suitable role model.” (Martino, 2008, p.192)

Sakire Anliak and Derya Sahin Beyazkurk (2008) discuss the career perspectives for male students in early childhood education based on the current lack of male teachers at that level. They discuss the fact that while other professions seem to be approaching a gender balance, the current state of gender inequality within elementary schools is quite alarming for future generations. Several reasons for the lack of participation by male teachers in early childhood education are: low salaries and status fear of being accused of sexual abuse, and stereotypes. Male teachers could be a vital part of early childhood education granted they are present. The authors discuss how important it is for gender-related perceptions to change in order to better serve our youth.

This discussion has lead researchers to look at the similarities and differences teaching styles of both male and female teachers. The differences between teachers based on gender have long been looked at as important factors for the recruitment of more male teachers. Much emphasis is placed on the teacher’s outlook on internal and external locus of control and how freedom fits into it all. (Kesici, 2008; Bryce & Blown, 2007). For example, the different male and female teachers and the way in which their beliefs play a role in their classroom management seem to have an effect on the way in which they control their classroom. Gender depicts particular classroom behaviors and interactions. This is seen in the way in which male teachers interact with students. Assumptions have been made that male teachers relate to their students because of their identification with them being male. One particular idea that has been discussed is the ability for male teachers to possess a certain amount of “male femininity” that can keep them in line with female teachers (Francis, 2008). Becky Francis takes this idea a step further in her introduction of the term “teaching manfully.” Recent studies have been done that support the ideal that male and female teachers have opposing teaching styles that have an effect on student performance and overall development. Through the study of male teacher’s practice, Francis reveals through interviews, the complex idea of gender and the way in which it provides for power struggles within educational policy had come to surface. Gender, according to analysis, facilitated particular gendered discourses and ideals. The idea that one can “teach manfully” was studied through pupil-teacher interactions and relationships. Francis takes a look at three distinct classroom environments in which males are at the head of the classroom. Teaching manfully is a complicated term. What does it mean to teach manfully? Francis sets out three different teaching approaches in order to observe the way that students react and perform. “The notion that teachers’ classroom behavior and interaction with pupils may be predicted on the basis of their gender underpins recent controversial campaigns to recruit more male teacher” (Francis, 2008). In support of Francis is Laura Sokal and Herb Katz (2008) who discuss the effect of male teachers on the *reading performances* of male students. Sokal and Katz introduce the idea of “boy friendly” instruction. They discuss the perception of reading to boys at the elementary level. Through interviews it was discovered that many young boys believe that reading is a feminine act. With the implementation of male teachers reading books along with computer-based books, the authors attempted to de-feminize reading. This is a prime example that much of what students are learning are categorized by gender. There seems to be a particularly important emphasis of male teachers on male students. The study had male students working with male instructors in a technology based reading assessment. The results however were inconclusive. Regardless, the preconceived notions of students on reading is extremely telling. Released government statements have referenced the need for recruitment. They believe that boys will have a better success rate when taught by male teachers. Merryn Hutchings, Bruce Carrington, Becky Francis, Christine Skelton, Barbara Read, and Ian Hall (2008) focus on this very issue. They look at an ESRC-funded project that on 307 seven to eight year old children in England. Half of the children were taught by males and the other by females. The interviews conducted asked children to focus on their teachers and how they view and interact with them. They were also asked about personal role models they’d like to emulate in order to see any patterns. The interview process yielded that only 11% of girls had ‘other sex’ role models while only 8% of boys had ‘other sex’ role models. Most girls related to strong female role models while boys did the same for strong male role models. Most cited the fact that these individuals were smart and funny as some of the main reasons for why they wanted to emulate them. The findings support the fact that gender, regardless of how one looks at it, does matter. Students are aware of who is at the head of the classroom. Students are learning through observing. “Through males and females, individuals learn about gender-appropriate belief patterns, personal preferences, abilities, personality traits, and ego” (Kesici, 2008).

Wayne Martino and Frank Blye (2006) discuss how male teachers had an effects on male students in a single sex high school in Australia. Martino and Blye set out to research how big an impact the idea of masculinity has on teacher-student relationships. Even more than that, they set out to see how pedagogical and curriculum approaches differed with this idea in mind. They conducted this research as a chance to argue the urgency for more masculine pedagogical practices in order to combat the alleged feminizing of schools. The journal provides knowledge about how gender subjectification is used by male teachers to assert their masculinity in their pedagogical practices.

The male role model is particularly important in certain household environments (Rice & Goessling, 2005; Hutchings et al. 2008). Male teachers seem to be extremely important when it comes to children who are coming from single-parent homes. “Contact with men in schools, particularly elementary schools, is usually limited to interactions with the principal, janitor, or physical education teacher or coach.” (Rice & Goessling, 2005). These interactions seem to be more vital then are credited. “It is often asserted that it is particularly important for boys from single-parent (generally assumed to be the mother) families to have male teachers. For example, the English Tory politician Liam Fox was quoted as arguing that boys should be taught in single-sex schools with strong male role models to help a ‘lost generation’ of fatherless young men find their way in life (Hinsliff & Temko, 2005). This argument does not specify what sort of behavior is required to be a role model: being male is sufficient.”(Hutchings, et al. 2008, p.136) All of these expectations have lead some males to feel uncertain about what is necessary of them at the elementary level and left them in an identity crisis of sorts(Skelton, 2009; Skelton & Read, 2006; Jones, 2007). A majority of the teachers have been believed that they needed to respond differently to students based on gender ideals (Skelton & Read, 2006). Deborah Jones (2007) discusses the idea that prospective male teachers are facing a “crisis of identity’ which is undermining the security of both groups and individuals. She writes: “Identities are either fixed, stable or permanent, but change according to the variety of cultural systems which present themselves, thus assuming different identities at different times. As Hall (1992) puts it, ‘we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with, at least temporarily’”(p.180). Jones looks at the current contradictions that are occurring within the education system regarding a male teachers place. These contradictions, Jones reveals, is keeping male teachers from entering and staying in the field. This is clear in the statistics she presents: There are 26,200 male primary teachers and 141,000 females. The numbers for headteacher positions are extremely disproportionate. Jones relays the concept of the “millennium man” which is, essentially, the “right kind” of man a male teacher should be. This idea, constructed by female teachers, would be extremely difficult for a male teacher to achieve and has led to an identity crisis which will be discussed later on in this paper.

One area that continuously appeared throughout many different journals is the idea of “Gender Match.” Gender Match is best defined as the assumption that children learn at a faster rate when being taught by those of the same sex is prevalent in the classroom dynamic (Sokal & Katz, 2008; Brown, 2009; Mancus, 1992). Back to researcher Becky Francis who also touches upon this when saying “the assumption that a gender ‘match’ between pupils (boys) and teachers (men) is beneficial to boys’ achievement rests upon social learning and sex role theories. This reliance is intriguing given that social learning theory has been extensively critiqued as based on essentialized conception of identity as fixed, unitary and replicable.” Research concurs that gender match has also been associated with race. Anthony L. Brown (2009) looks at the relationship between African American male teachers and African American male students. In particular the “performance of the African American male teacher. In such discussions, policy makers and practitioners positioned the African American male teacher as a one- dimensional ‘‘role model.’’ The implicit belief was that African American men serving as ‘‘role models’’ possess a core set of beliefs, experiences, and practices necessary to counter the social and educational conditions of the African American, However, what the findings of this study revealed is that contingent on how African American male teachers conceptualized African American male social and educational needs resulted in different modalities of performativity agency to surface.” (Brown, 2009, pp421-423). Researcher Dianne Mancus (1992) relays how the lack of male teachers isn’t only a problem for male students. It’s a problem for girls as well (Mancus, 1992; Marsh, Martin, &

Cheng, 2008). Mancus looks closely at how big a role sex stereotyping plays on the behaviors of two groups of elementary students (one group consisting of 44 males & 41 females and another group of 60 males and 43 females). Students were questioned about male and female teacher’s competence. Boy students, in particular, were questioned about the profession of teaching and any interest they may have in become a teacher. Through these student assessments it was discovered that male teachers had a greater influence on the boys’ views on teacher competence over female teachers. Mancus discusses the outcome of her research: “The boys, while being relatively discontent in school are forced to develop their personal resources, while the relatively con- tented girls are encouraged to rely upon institutional resources. The out- come of unequal access to the resources of the school is demonstrable stress for boys and insufficient personal challenge for girls” (p. 112).

Along the same lines of “Gender Match” is the idea of “Gender Gap” and the call for a gender balance in elementary schools ( Drudy, 2008; Carrington, Tymms, & Merrell, 2008). Bruce Carringonton, Peter Tymms, and Christine Merrell (2008) talk about “gender gap” and its effect on student growth. They write “the ‘gender gap’ in school performance is held to derive from the so-called ‘feminisation’ of the teaching profession and the consequent lack of role models for boys. Thus, the drive to recruit and retain male teachers may be seen as a constituent element of wider policies directed towards the goal of school improvement” (p. 316).

Matt Bolch (2008) talks about this gender imbalance in his study of an Alabama elementary school. Smith’s Station Elementary is the home to a “man hall” in which three clustered classrooms house the only male teachers in the school. The “man hall” only offers 60 seats to prospective students who are in need of additional academic direction. Bolch writes that “the decline in the percentage of male teachers in the Smiths Station district-as well as nationwide-has been felt keenly, particularly at a time when the overall school performance of boys is on the wane. In 1980, about 17 percent of elementary school teachers were male, compared with 14.2 percent of men in today's elementary classrooms, according to the NEA.”

Research concurs (Mills, et al. 2004; Johnson, 2008) that much of the problem lies in the recruitment and retainment of male teachers. Shaun P. Johnson discusses how important it is to get more male teachers into the classroom immediately in order to defect the effect of: “The solution to recruiting more men to teaching requires both individual (parents, guidance counselors, and principals) and statewide effort. Individuals need to invite boys to become teachers and offer them opportunities to help to teach younger children.” Recruitment is necessary from within in order to try and make advancements for students. Martin Mills, Wayne Martino, and Bob Lingard elaborate on this idea through there analyzation of A Male Teachers’ Strategy developed by Education Queensland. “One of the suggested strategies in the Education Queensland document involves developing ways to ensure that men entertaining the teaching profession have some sense of career trajectory. However, as one female teacher recently commented in interviews in a government-funded research project (Lingard et al., 2002), 'lack of promotional opportunities shouldn't deter men from teaching, they are usually promoted within five minutes of become a teacher" (Mills et al., 2004, p. 356).

On the other side of the debate are those who believe that male teachers have little to no distinct effect on student development. (Cushman, 2008; Sheelagh, 2008; Marsh et al., 2008) Many believe that the idea of the male role model holds no merit in our education system. What is the criteria for a male role model? Researcher Penni Cushman set out to find out the answer to this very question. Discoveries showed that many of the reasons behind hiring male teachers played right into stereotypes and sexiest ideals. Through the surveying of 250 New Zealand school principals, Cushman discovered that these principals expressed that male role models should have masculine attributes. In particular, Cushman discovered most favored males with strong “heterosexual” tendencies. For example: Rugby-playing was cited with being particularly important. The problem with the lack of male teachers is what makes someone a role model depends on the individual. It’s particularly discouraging when principals focus on “heterosexual tendencies” as criteria for combatting the lack of male teachers in elementary schools. It provides no solid expectation of what is expected from them and has left many disheartened and unsure of what is expected from them. Male teachers thus become unprepared. Falling in line with this idea is concern that male teachers are unable or unwilling to take on the persona of a “mother.” Researcher Malcolm Haase calls it the “mothering role” and argues that research shows that male teachers are either unwilling or unprepared to take on the role that female teachers have come accustomed to. Haase conducted a study which yielded that an argument could actually be made against the employment of more male teachers. In fact, the author argues that results may prove that the employment of male teachers may go against the interests of gender justice. The results proved that their needs to be a better understanding of both gender and social power amongst teachers. In other words, along for there to be an emphasis on the employment of male teachers, their needs to be an emphasis on the impact of instruction on the gender system. The article reinforces that it isn’t just enough to hire more male teachers. Male teachers are either unprepared or misinformed of their duties and therefore could be doing more harm than help within the education system. Where does on draw the line? Shaeelagh Drudy (2008) conducted similar research in which the necessity for boys to have male teachers as role models was tested.

“In this study there was a strongly perceived association among respondents between the nurturing role of women and their assumed greater suitability for teaching very young children. The domestic ideology which provides cultural support for the notion that women’s careers should be compatible with homemaking responsibilities, while weakening somewhat over the last couple of decades in Ireland and elsewhere, was still perceptible. It was evident in a number of ways in the findings in this study – e.g. in the perception of school students and, albeit to a lesser extent, student teachers, that women were best suited to the career of primary teaching. No such ideology existed to provide a connection between men’s careers and homemaking/parental responsibilities” (Drudy, 3008, p.312)

A majority of individuals believe that students rarely pay attention to the Lahelma takes a look at the importance of the role of gender in student development. Through conduction of interviews with students at ages 13 and 14, and follow up interviews at ages 17-18, Lahelma was able to come to the conclusion that the gender of their teacher wasn’t important to students. Rather than considering gender relevant in any aspect, they appreciated “good” teachers above all else. This resulted in the questioning whether this is a teacher problem more than a student problem. What seemed to be a problem for teachers didn’t prove to transcend to student opinions. Lahelma is one of many researchers who wanted to know with whom the problem really lied. Are the students really recognizing any difference to their education? Results proved that it was quality that overrode any necessity of gender.

Similar results were discovered by Herbert W. Marsh, Andrew J. Martin, & Jacqueline H.S. Cheng (2008) who conducted a study focused on a cross-classified multilevel model with 5 levels of observation. They were: school, teacher, class, student, and subject. Authors discovered that the idea held no merit and, in actuality, girls were more responsive to the presence of a male teacher at the head of the class. There was little or no evidence to support the benefit of male teachers for boys. Marsh, Martin, and Cheng write:

“This finding runs counter to the gender-stereotypic model and some popular claims and beliefs that boys’ academic development is dependent on there being ample presence of male teachers in their academic life. In relation to this, it is important to consider care- fully the generalizability of this finding. First, it does not necessarily apply to younger children, because the data collected in this study were from middle and high school students only. Similar research is needed at the elementary school level to ascertain the generalizability of the finding to younger children” (p. 93).

Finally, there is support from several theorists that discuss the implications that come with the lack of male teachers at a young age. One theorist, Lee Vygotsky discussed the important role that school interactions plays on a child’s cognitive development. Vygotsky suggests school learning is largely informed by the interaction between the domains of the home and the school. According to Vygotsky, school is where children “receive their primary conceptual and learning orientations. Finally, he asserts that regardless of cultural background, the most effective school learning occurs when learning assumptions in the home, or “spontaneous” conceptual domain, are meaningfully connected to the assumptions en- countered in the school, the “schooled” conceptual domain” (Meacham, 2006, p. 192). Students are learning and growing and the lack of male teachers, whether positive or negative, has an effect on what they are observing. Eulalee N. Boddington (2009) takes a closer look at the theory of Jean Piaget. Outlined is the way in which children perceive and develop. Piaget’s cognitive development is particularly investigated and the important stages that play such a huge art in a child’s growth. Both Piaget and Vygotsky discuss how culture and one’s environment effect the cognitive process and overall development of young children. Elementary school is the basis of a young child’s social interactions. What they are observing is all the more important.

**Statement of Hypothesis**

The presence of a male teacher teaching reading of 20+ 3rd grade students, everyday over a four week period for 45 minutes each day, will have a positive effect on the development and performance of students which will be measured by classroom observations, student/teacher interviews, student/parent surveys, comparing classroom readers taught by a female teacher, running records, and examining reading assessments during the four week period.

**Method**

***Participants***

The researcher has decided to do his study in two third grade classrooms (*common* *branch*) located at PS X. PS X is located in Brooklyn, New York. The two classes featurestudent’s at all different reading levels. Both classroom have a total of 25 students. Each classroom has students on reading levels ranging from E-N.

The independent variable that will be utilized is that one classroom will have a male teacher implementing thorough reading instruction. The teacher will be working with small groups during guiding reading instruction as well as performing weekly assessments over the four week period. The other classroom will have a female teacher at the head of the classroom. The teacher will also be working with small groups during guiding reading instruction as well as performing weekly assessments over the course of the study. Both teachers will be working with students on similar reading levels.

***Instruments***

This action research will last approximately four weeks. The reading assessments of students in both classrooms 1 and 2 during the four week period will be analyzed in order to track any progression. I will be sending a letter home to the parents of each of the classrooms along with a short questionnaire featuring some questions about student performance as well as opinions on gender. The survey focuses on their strengths and weaknesses. The parents will be sent a follow-up survey at the end of the four week period in order to note any differences in their students reading abilities.

Another survey will be handed out to each of the students in both classroom environments. This survey will have students focus on their daily activities as readers. It also features a few questions on their teacher addresses certain situations within the classroom. This survey will be a good way of gearing how big a role the teacher plays in the student’s lives.

I will be reviewing two sets of Running Records in order to see the progress over the four week period. I will also be sitting in on some guiding reading sessions involving leveled reading books for both classes in order to see the progression for each. I will be conducting student interviews for both classes in which development is better assessed as well as to observe how much the teacher’s gender really plays a role in the student’s lives. Do they really see a difference?

Finally, I will be conducting teacher interviews to understand the differences in teaching styles between male and female teachers. Do these two teachers have different approaches to the curriculum? Does their age factor in at all? This survey will better track the teacher’s rituals as well as any differences they observe in their students.

**Results**

**Discussion**

**Implication**

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**Appendices**

***Appendix A: Consent Form***

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian,

My name is Salvatore Zito and I am currently completing my graduate program of the City University of New York at Brooklyn College. This semester I am responsible for conducting an action research project within the classroom. I’ve decided to focus my action research on how the shortage of male educators, on the elementary school level, has had an effect on student development.

I am writing requesting permission to have your child be a participant in my research study. I would like to compare the progression of readers in a classroom taught by a male teacher in comparison to readers in a classroom taught by a female teacher.

After being granted parental permission, I hope to have the students and respected teachers involved in an interview session. The students will also be given surveys and questionnaires to be filled out. Parents of the students will be given a survey as well. I will also ask permission to use the results of their reading assessments in order to track their progression over the four week period. **All names will be respectively withheld**.

This action research project is extremely important to me. I want to stress that all information will remain confidential. **The school, teachers, students and parents will all be kept anonymous**. I hope to learn more about student development and if there is any correlation with the gender of their educator. I greatly appreciate your support. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me. zitosal18@gmail.com or at 347-962-5171. You can also contact my instructor, Professor Sharon A. O’Connor-Petruso. oconnorpetrusos@brooklyn.cuny.edu.

Sincerely,

Salvatore Zito

X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (print: parent/legal guardian) have read and understand the information provided above. I (circle one: **agree**, **do not agree**) to allow my child to participate in the aforementioned research project.

**Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Salvatore Zito and I am currently a graduate student of the City University of New York at Brooklyn College. I am conducting a research for my action research paper on how the shortage of male educators, on the elementary school level, has had an effect on student development. In order to conduct this research I am seeking permission to observe your classroom during reading period. I would like to compare the progression of readers in a classroom taught by a male teacher in comparison to readers in a classroom taught by a female teacher. If you chose to participate I will ask you and your students to complete questionnaires and surveys to assist in my research. Your students will participate in guiding research sessions and be assessed by you. I will also be asking permission to conduct a simple interview with both you and your students. **All information will be kept confidential and teacher identity, student identity along with school information will remain anonymous.** . I greatly appreciate your support. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me. zitosal18@gmail.com or at 347-962-5171. You can also contact my instructor, Professor Sharon A. O’Connor-Petruso. oconnorpetrusos@brooklyn.cuny.edu.

Sincerely,

Salvatore Zito

X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ give my permission to be a participant in this research study.

Teacher’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Principle,

My name is Salvatore Zito and I am currently completing my graduate program of the City University of New York at Brooklyn College. This semester I am responsible for conducting an action research project within the classroom. I’ve decided to focus my action research on how the shortage of male educators, on the elementary school level, has had an effect on student development.

I am writing requesting permission to use two third grade classrooms in order to conduct my research. I would like to compare the progression of readers in a classroom taught by a male teacher in comparison to readers in a classroom taught by a female teacher.

After being granted permission to conduct my research at your school, I hope to have the students and respected teachers involved in an interview session. The students will also be given surveys and questionnaires to be filled out. Parents of the students will be given a survey as well. I will also ask permission to use the results of the students reading assessments in order to track their progression over the four week period. **All names will be respectively withheld.**

This action research project is extremely important to me. I want to stress that all information will remain confidential. **The school, teachers, students and parents will all be kept anonymous**. I hope to learn more about student development and if there is any correlation with the gender of their educator. I greatly appreciate your support. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me. zitosal18@gmail.com or at 347-962-5171. You can also contact my instructor, Professor Sharon A. O’Connor-Petruso. oconnorpetrusos@brooklyn.cuny.edu.

Sincerely,

Salvatore Zito

X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ give permission to allow Salvatore Zito to conduct his research study at my school.

Principle’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Appendix B: Parent Questionnaire***

***Appendix C: Student Survey***

***Appendix E: Student and Teacher Interviews***

***Appendix F: Guided Reading Observations***